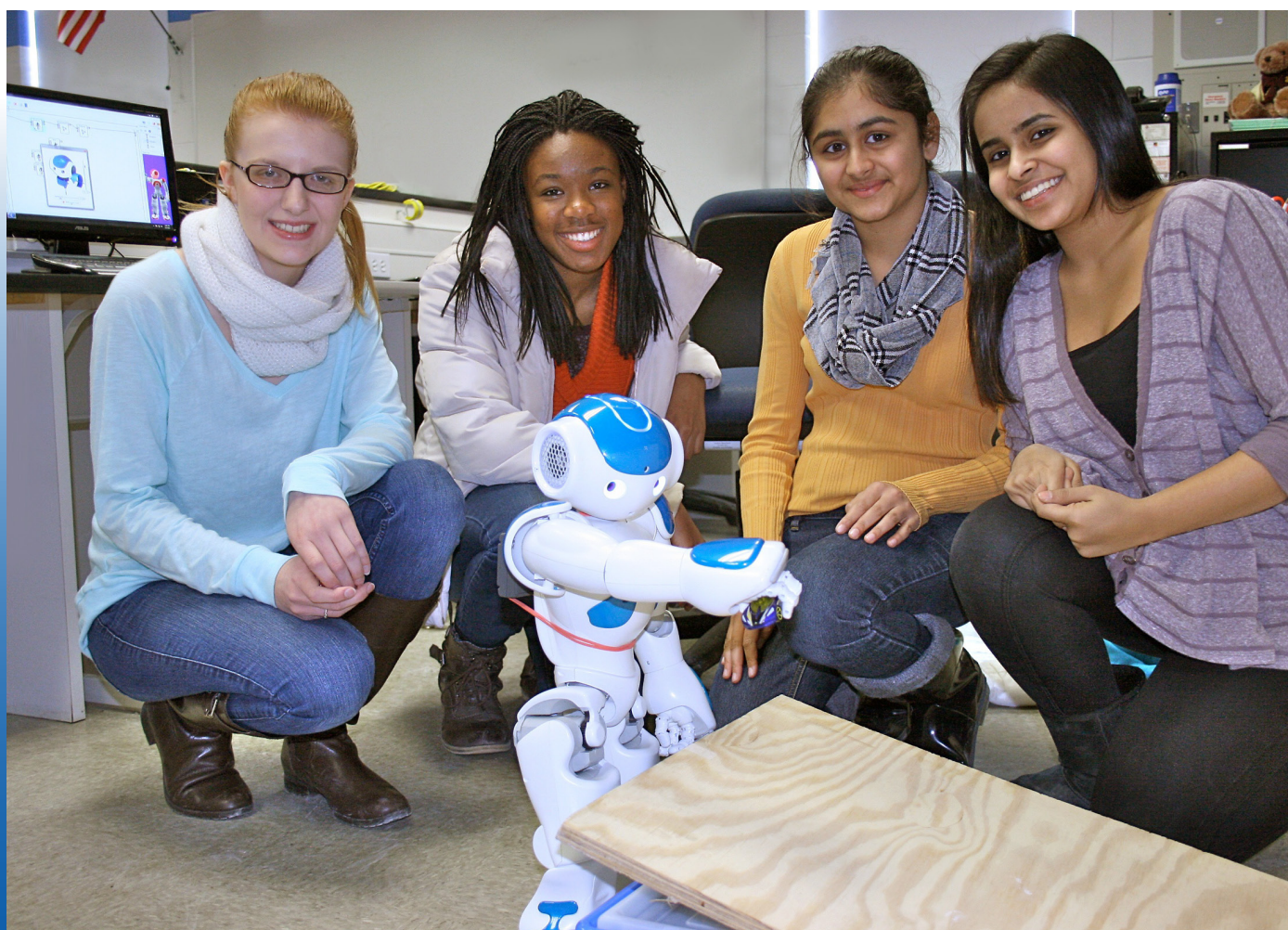




Pro Excellentia



Teaching Robots

New Albany High School students (l. to r.) Lauryn Woodyard, Ama Korenteng, Ashmi Patel, and Harrine Ramesh are piloting an advanced robotics course that will give robots a starring role in the classroom (see page 14).

Experiencing History Virtually

Fort Meigs Association

The latest 21st century mobile technology is transporting students back in time to learn what day-to-day life was like for a soldier during the War of 1812. With iPads in hands, these “new recruits” experience the trek soldiers made from starting points in southern Ohio to northwest Ohio’s Ft. Meigs, which served as a temporary staging area for an attack on Canada during the war. Along the way, they have to trudge through the atrocious Great Black Swamp, learn how to load and shoot a musket, cut down trees to build a camp, and participate in drills as they would have done 200 years ago. Students “travel” in groups of six and make critical decisions about what to pack, how to cook, where to sleep, and whether or not to re-enlist when their service commitment is up.

SIM MARCH: 1812 allows students to virtually step into the boots of these soldiers using real-world scenarios taken from the diaries of 1812 servicemen, explains Rick Finch, Site Director at the Ft. Meigs Historical Site in Perrysburg. Educators at the Fort created a comprehensive outreach program to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the “forgotten war”—the country’s first major war as a sovereign nation and one that did much to shape the state of Ohio.

Designed for students in the 3rd and 4th grades, the traveling program includes the iPad simulation along with a 45-minute talk from a Ft. Meigs interpreter, who visits classrooms dressed in period uniform. He answers questions and showcases the uniform, equipment, and weaponry used at the time. Teachers receive a packet of relevant lessons with built-in formative assessments to engage students before and after the classroom visit.

“We are finding that more and more students can’t come to historic sites and museums, so we are finding ways to go to them,” explains Mr. Finch. “This is a really good learning experience and it’s an economical one for the schools as well.”

Ft. Meigs received a grant from the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation to partner with 20 northwest Ohio teachers in an effort to provide a platform for the project’s success. During a three-hour workshop held on-site at Ft. Meigs, the teachers—turned students—experienced all aspects of the outreach program. This included a demonstration of the pre- and post-visit activities, a question and answer session with the uniformed interpreter, and an opportunity to test the iPad simulation.

“The workshop was fascinating,” says Susan Sparks, who teaches 4th grade at Larchmont Elementary School in Toledo. “There were great lessons all wrapped

around core curriculum. I also liked that we were able to experience the hands-on part of the program. There were a lot of problems that we had to solve together that made us think about what we would do in different situations. It put us back in time. More so than reading about history, we got to experience it. It was also nice to be able to walk away from the workshop with the [lessons] all ready to go.”

An important aspect of the program, explains Mr. Finch, is that it is cross-curricular.

“We are teaching social studies and we are teaching history, but there are science and math sections, too,” he remarks. “By using this program, teachers can hit a large portion of their curriculum.”

The day of the classroom visit, Mrs. Sparks says her students were looking forward to the iPad simulation. “I hope they learn that history can be fun, that

Ft. Meigs interpreter Dan Woodward answers students’ questions about the distinctive uniform American soldiers wore during the War of 1812.



Virtual History continued



Larchmont Elementary students are the first to virtually experience a soldier's march across Ohio during the War of 1812. Together they problem solve a variety of situations drawn from real-life soldier diaries that are presented to them on the iPads.

it's interesting, that it's something to experience and explore," she remarks.

Possibly the most memorable lesson the students took away was that they would not want to be a soldier from that era.

"I wouldn't because of the food they ate—hard bread that was moldy and had worms in it," remarks one student. Another adds: "I would not want to have to march through the Great Black Swamp." A third thought the wool uniforms would have been very uncomfortable—hot in the summer but not warm enough in the winter.

"I want the students to remember how hard it was to be a soldier back then," says Dan Woodward, Ft. Meigs Program Manager, who also serves as the visiting soldier. "We hope this is a good representation of how much work these men did for our country."

"This is a really fun and exciting way to teach kids about history," adds Mr. Finch, who often hears that history is

boring—just a long list of dates and facts. "We tell people that that is an outmoded form of teaching history. [Teachers] really have to make the lessons about an experience. And they have to be able to not only tell the history, but explain why it's important. We're hoping this program is something they can use to help teach their students about history and to make it fun and engaging.

"I think this is going to really resonate with kids," he adds. "Not only is it an adventure, but we're utilizing iPad technology—something the kids already know and can relate to easily. There are some things we can't replicate in real life today because it is so expensive or the conditions were so bad, but we can try to bring a slice of that back virtually."

For further information contact:
Mr. Rick Finch, Ft. Meigs, P.O. Box 3
Perrysburg, Ohio 43551
rfinch@ohiohistory.org

Ft. Meigs is the largest, reconstructed, wooden-walled fort in the United States. This National Historic Landmark sits on its original location along the Maumee River in Perrysburg, Ohio.

